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Note verbale dated 16 July 2015 from the Permanent Mission of Slovenia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Slovenia to the United Nations presents its compliments to the President of the General Assembly and has the honour to attach herewith, in accordance with Assembly resolution 60/251, the voluntary pledges and commitments of the Republic of Slovenia regarding its candidature for the Human Rights Council for the period 2016-2018 (see annex).

* A/70/150.

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Annex to the note verbale dated 16 July 2015 from the Permanent Mission of Slovenia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Candidacy of Slovenia for the Human Rights Council, 2016-2018

Voluntary pledges and commitments in accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/251

Respect for human rights is a pivotal founding principle of the Slovenian State. Its Constitution, in keeping with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, provides strong guarantees for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Slovenia decided to present its candidature for membership of the Human Rights Council for the 2016-2018 term based on its deep commitment to human rights at home and in the conduct of its international relations. Slovenia is a party to practically all major United Nations and regional human rights treaties and instruments, which are transposed directly into Slovenian law. Their implementation is monitored by an independent national human rights institution, the Office of the Human Rights Ombudsperson.

We seek to contribute to international peace and security, which we see as attainable only through the wide promotion and protection of human rights. Thus, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/251, we put forward the following voluntary pledges and commitments:

1. Slovenia will work for the advancement of human rights in international human rights forums

Slovenia has been actively supporting and promoting human rights in the Human Rights Council as well as within the wider United Nations system, including in the General Assembly, the Third Committee and the Security Council. Human rights have also been a particular focus of our regional cooperation.

We are proud to have served as a member of the Human Rights Council from 2007 to 2010. Slovenia is committed to the universality of the universal periodic review, and has been preparing questions and recommendations in a non-selective manner for all States under review. We have also been constructively addressing all recommendations arising from our own reviews and have, in this, been fully committed to engaging with other Member States, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the wider civil society and United Nations actors.

The pledges and commitments we put forward for our first Council membership term were fulfilled in full, both with respect to our contribution to the functioning of human rights institutions and in regard to the national implementation of international human rights instruments. We have fulfilled our pledges to ratify and/or sign Additional Protocol III to the Geneva Conventions, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the optional protocol thereto.

Slovenia attaches the utmost importance to the role of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and actively works with the human rights special procedures, all of which have standing invitations to visit Slovenia.

As a Council member, we will continue our efforts to promote human rights in a fair and objective manner and will work towards making the Human Rights Council effective. We will continue to pursue our commitment to cooperate with all Member States and the United Nations system as a whole. We will pay particular attention to helping to ensure the universality and impartiality of Human Rights Council mechanisms and will maintain a regular dialogue with NGOs and civil society.

Slovenia will continue to fulfil its obligations under the international human rights conventions and to submit reports to the relevant treaty bodies. We prepared for and duly cooperated in our second universal periodic review in 2014.

2. Slovenia will work for gender equality and the protection of the most vulnerable

Slovenia's traditional human rights priorities include the rights of women and of the most vulnerable groups, including children, ethnic and other minorities and disabled persons. We also wish to participate actively in furthering and strengthening the rights of older persons. As a Council member, Slovenia will further increase its focus on these priorities, both internationally and nationally.

Gender equality

Gender equality in Slovenia is promoted through a number of legislative mechanisms, including the paramount Act on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, which helped to secure a steep increase in the representation of women in political life. Internationally, we have been supporting the inclusion of a gender perspective into the work of the United Nations and into the work of the Human Rights Council in particular, while paying special attention to fighting discrimination in law and practice, as well as focusing on women, peace and security.

Slovenia will work further to efficiently implement its national action plan relating to Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008) on women, peace and security. We will focus on the integration of gender equality, the empowerment of women and the promotion of their rights throughout international organizations, in particular the United Nations system and the Human Rights Council.

Children

In Slovenia, the rights of children are protected and promoted through a plethora of laws and programmes, which take fully into account the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. We pay particular attention to the participation of children and to their human rights education and learning. In this regard, we have been educating children not only in Slovenia, but also in a number of other countries through the "Our Rights" project. Slovenia has been fully supporting the work of all special representatives and progressive approaches within

the United Nations, while placing special emphasis on children and armed conflict and on violence against children.

We pledge that, as a member of the Council, we will strengthen our efforts to promote the rights of children in Slovenia and the international community, and in particular within the United Nations system. Our particular focus will be on human rights education and learning for children and on fighting all forms of violence and abuse against them.

Minorities

Slovenia strives to protect the rights of its minorities and ethnic communities and groups through a number of legislative and institutional provisions, by which it also enacts the principles of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities. In its international activities, Slovenia is engaged in efforts to ensure the implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the functioning of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. We are committed to fighting discrimination and violence based on religion, race or ethnicity. Furthermore, we are also committed to ensuring the full enjoyment of human rights by all, regardless of any personal circumstance.

We pledge that, as a member of the Council, we will pursue the agenda of protecting and promoting the human rights of ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities, and of ensuring the full enjoyment of human rights by all, regardless of sexual orientation or any other personal circumstance, and we will strive for the due consideration of those issues at the United Nations.

Older persons

To ensure the active participation of older persons in all walks of life and to effectively promote their human rights, Slovenia adopted the strategy entitled "Solidarity, good intergenerational relations and quality ageing of the population". Numerous initiatives are also in place for the protection and promotion of the human rights of older persons, many of them carried out in cooperation with civil society. Slovenia participates in the work of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing for the purpose of strengthening the protection of the human rights of older persons and has co-sponsored an initiative in the Human Rights Council for a new independent expert to address that issue.

As a Council member, we will work to bring due attention in international human rights forums, and at the United Nations in particular, to the need to strengthen the protection and promotion of the human rights of older persons and to ensure their active and effective participation in the full spectrum of societal life.

3. Slovenia will promote a human rights perspective in the developmental agenda, in environmental protection, in the conduct of business and in education

Development agenda

Slovenia's overall development strategy and related legislation are rooted in the principle of sustainable development and include a perspective of social sustainability aimed at ensuring equitable human development, reducing social risks and improving the social inclusion of all individuals. Slovenia has also been supporting a human rights-based approach to development internationally. It is a member of the Blue Group, a group of countries devoted to promoting the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation.

As a Council member, Slovenia will continue to work towards the inclusion of a human-rights perspective in the post-2015 development agenda. In this regard, we will pay particular attention to gender equality, the empowerment of women, children's rights and the rights of older persons. We will also strive to ensure that the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation is included in the post-2015 development agenda.

Environmental protection

Slovenia sees a safe, healthy and secure environment as being fundamentally important to the realization of all other human rights, and the right to a healthy environment is guaranteed by the Constitution and enacted through the paramount Environment Protection Act and related legislation. In the international context, Slovenia is among the co-sponsors of the Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment.

We pledge that, as a Council member, we will further promote the nexus of environmental issues in the enjoyment and the realization of all human rights, and continue to support the work of the Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment.

Business

Slovenia ascribes the utmost importance to the inclusion of a human rights perspective in business activities and is undertaking steps towards the national implementation of the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. It has also developed a number of socially responsible and inclusive entrepreneurial projects.

Slovenia will strive to further develop the necessary framework for putting those principles into practice nationally and actively promote the issue within the "Protect, Respect and Remedy" Framework of the United Nations.

Education

Slovenia has been an active promoter of human rights education and learning, which has been its consistent policy both at home and internationally. We have been implementing the first phase of the World Programme for Human Rights Education and have launched the activities for the second phase.

As a Council member, we will continue actively to promote the World Programme internationally, and strive to contribute to its further implementation and the development of its third phase.

Slovenia is looking forward to further strengthening its work in the Human Rights Council and its cooperation with Council members as well as with all Member States of the United Nations, NGOs and civil society in order to continue contributing to the fulfilment of the important mandate entrusted to the Council to better protect and promote all human rights for all people everywhere in the world.